CRISIS IN KOSOVO (ITEM NO. 2)—REMARKS BY PROFESSOR MICHAEL KLARE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, on April 29, 1999, I joined with Representative CYNTHIA A MCKINNEY and Representative MICHAEL E. CAPUANO to host the second in a series of Congressional Teach-In sessions on the Crisis in Kosovo. If a peaceful resolution to this conflict is to be found in the coming weeks, it is essential that we cultivate a consciousness of peace and actively search for creative solutions. We must construct a foundation for peace through negotiation, mediation, and diplomacy.

Part of the dynamic of peace is a willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue, to listen to one another openly and to share our views in a constructive manner. I hope that these Teach-In sessions will contribute to this process by providing a forum for Members of Congress and the public to explore alternatives to the bombing and options for a peaceful resolution. We will hear from a variety of speakers on different sides of the Kosovo situation. I will be introducing into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD transcripts of their remarks and essays that shed light on the many dimensions of the crisis.

This presentation is by Michael Klare, a professor of world security studies at Hampshire College. A noted expert on foreign policy, Professor Klare discusses the content of the Rambouillet plan, and speculated that the decision to bomb Serbia was closely related to the inauguration of a ''new strategic blueprint'' by NATO. He also presents a 5-point plan for peace in the Balkans. Following his presentation is his opinion piece from Newsday, April 4, 1999, entitled ''Kosovo Failures Show Path to Real Peace.'' I commend these well-reasoned documents to my colleagues.

PRESENTATION BY PROFESSOR MICHAEL KLARE TO CONGRESSIONAL TEACH-IN ON KOSOVO

First, I want to thank Representatives Kucinich, McKinney, and Capuano for affording me this opportunity to address the issues raised by the current conflict in the Balkans. I believe that public discussion of these issues is essential if Congress and the American people are to make informed decisions about vital national security matters.

As for my own views, I want to make it clear from the start that I am very troubled by the strategy adopted by the United States and NATO to deal with the crisis in Kosovo. Now, I agree that we all share an obligation to resist genocide and ethnic cleansing whenever such hideous behavior occurs. And I think that we all agree that Serbian military and police authorities have engaged in such behavior in Kosovo. The killings and other atrocities that have occurred there represent an assault on the human community as a whole, and must be vigorously opposed.

But this does not mean that we cannot be critical of the means adopted by the United States and NATO to counter this behavior, if we find them lacking. Indeed, our very concern for the lives of the Albanian Kosovars requires that we agonize over every strategic decision and reject any move that could conceivably jeopardize the safety of the people most at risk.

Unfortunately, I do not believe that U.S. and NATO leaders adequately subjected their proposed strategies to this demanding standard. In saying this, I do not mean to question the sincerity of their concern for the people of Kosovo. But I do believe that they rushed to adopt a strategy that was not optimally designed to protect the lives of those at risk.

The haste of which I speak was most evident at the so-called peace negotiations at Rambouillet in France. I say ''so-called,'' because it is now apparent that the United States and NATO did not really engage in the give and take of true negotiations, but rather presented the Serbian leadership with an ultimatum that they were almost certain to reject. This ultimatum called for the virtual separation of Kosovo from Serbia (if not right away, then in three years' time), the occupation of Kosovo by an armed NATO force, and the use of Serbian territory as a staging area for NATO forces in Kosovo—a drastic infringement on Serbian sovereignty that no Serbian leader could agree to, and still expect to remain in office.

Moreover, NATO representatives in Rambouillet evidently did not consider any other scenarios for settlement of the crisis, for example a compromise solution that might have averted the tragedy of the past few weeks. Such a compromise would have entailed a high degree of autonomy for Kosovo within Serbia (as was the case during the Tito period), with U.N. rather than NATO forces providing the necessary security for returning Albanian Kosovars.

Perhaps such a compromise was not really possible at Rambouillet, but we will never know, because NATO representatives gave Milosevic a take-it-or-leave-it package, and he predictably said no. As soon as the OSCE observers were pulled out of Kosovo, the Serbians began their attacks on the Albanian Kosovars. And the NATO air war, when it began a few days later, has proved to have little practical effect on the situation on the ground.

Now, some analysts may argue that haste was necessary at that point, to forestall the actions long planned by the Milosevic regime. But this does not make sense. If Milosevic had initiated full-scale ethnic cleansing while negotiations were under way in Rambouillet and the OSCE observers were still in Kosovo, he would have been exposed to the world as a vicious tyrant and could not have prevented a U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force against him under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter. It is very unlikely that he would have chosen this outcome, as it probably would have forced Russia to side with NATO against him. As it happened, NATO began the air war without a supporting U.N. resolution, and Milosevic was able to conceal the atrocities in Kosovo from international observation.

Why, then, did NATO rush to begin military operations against Serbia? I believe that the decision to terminate the negotiations at Rambouillet and commence the air war was driven in part by extraneous factors that were not directly connected to developments in Kosovo proper. In particular, I believe that President Clinton was influenced in part by the timing of NATO's 50th Anniversary Summit meeting in Washington. As we know, the crisis in Kosovo was reaching the boiling point only two months before the NATO Summit, which of course was scheduled for April 23–25. The White House had been planning since 1998 to use this occasion to unveil a new strategic blueprint for NATO—one that called for Alliance to transform itself from a collective defense organization into a regional police force with jurisdiction extending far beyond the organization's traditional defense lines. Under this new strategy, NATO would be primed to engage in ''crisis response'' operations whenever stability was threatened on the periphery of NATO territory. (Such operations are also referred to in NATO documents as ''non-Article 5 operations,'' meaning military actions not prompted by an attack on one of NATO's members, such as those envisioned in the collective defense provisions of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty.)

I believe that Mr. Clinton must have concluded that a failure to take vigorous action against Milosevic in March would have cast doubt on the credibility of the new NATO strategy (on which the air campaign against Serbia is based), while a quick success would no doubt have helped build support for its ratification. In arriving at this conclusion, Mr. Clinton was also influenced (according to a report in The New York Times of April 18, 1999) by intelligence reports suggesting that Milosevic would give in to NATO demands after a relatively short period of bombing.

And so the United States and NATO rushed into an air campaign against Serbia before it had exhausted all of the potential for a negotiated settlement with Belgrade. And I would argue that this very haste has damaged the effectiveness of NATO action. For one thing, it did not allow NATO officials sufficient time to prepare for the refugee crisis provoked by Serbian action in Kosovo, resulting in the massive chaos witnessed at border regions in Albania and Macedonia. In addition, precipitous NATO action has allowed Milosevic to conceal the atrocities in Kosovo from his own people, and to blame the suffering there on NATO bombs rather than Serbian violence. As well, such haste gives the appearance that NATO is acting without proper U.N. Security Council authorization, and thus is in violation of international law. Finally, it has alienated Russia, which sees the air war as a one-sided attack on a friendly Slavic state.

NATO itself has also suffered from this haste, in that the parliaments and publics of the NATO member states were not given an adequate opportunity to debate the merits of the air war and the new strategic blueprint upon which it is based. Given the fact that NATO is an alliance of democracies, in which key decisions are supposedly arrived at only after full consultation with the people and their elected representatives, this lack of consultation runs the risk of discrediting NATO over the long run. Given the magnitude and significance of the strategic transportation now under way, entailing the possible initiation of NATO military operations in areas outside of NATO's traditional defense lines, it is essential that the U.S. Congress and the parliaments of the NATO member states now open up debate on the new strategy, as articulated in paragraphs 31, 41, 48, and 49 of the Alliance's ''New Strategic Concept,'' adopted on April 24, 1999.

This having been said, it is necessary to return to the problem at hand: the evident failure of the existing NATO strategy to halt ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and to force Milosevic into submission to NATO's demands. As indicated, I believe that this strategy was adopted in haste, and that the consequences of haste was an imperfect strategy. It is now time to reconsider NATO's strategy, and devise a more realistic and effective alternative. Our goal must be to convince Serbian authorities to accept a less harsh version of the Rambouillet proposal—one that gives Albanian Kosovars local self-government and effective protection against Serbian aggression (guaranteed by an armed international presence), but without separating Kosovo from Serbia altogether. To get to this point, I propose a five-point strategy composed of the following:

(1) An unconditional halt in the bombing of Serbia proper. This would deprive Milosevic use of the air war as a tool for mobilizing Serbian nationalism on his behalf. (2) The establishment of a no-fly, no-tank, no-troop-movement zone covering all Serbian forces in Kosovo, and enforced by NATO aircraft. Serbian forces would be told that they will not be attacked if they remain in their barracks, but will come under attack if they engage in military action against Kosovar civilians. Such attacks, when initiated, would be directed solely against those forces directly involved in armed violence against civilians. (3) The imposition and enforcement by NATO of a total economic blockade against Serbia, excluding only food and medical supplies. (4) The restarting of NATO-Serbia negotiations over the future of Kosovo, with assistance provided by Russia and other third parties. No preconditions should be set regarding the identity of any armed international force deployed in Kosovo to protect the Kosovars, but it should be made clear that Serbia will have to accept some armed international presence. (5) A promise that economic sanctions will be lifted as soon as Serbia agrees to a just and enforceable settlement in Kosovo, allowing the Albanian Kosovars to return under armed international protection. Also, a promise that Serbia would be able to benefit from future regional reconstruction and redevelopment programs supported by the EU and other such bodies.

Such a strategy, I believe, would deprive Milosevic of any further propaganda victories while affording full protection to the remaining Albanian civilians in Kosovo. It is also likely to receive strong international support and increase the pressures (and incentives) for Serbia to agree to a just and peaceful resolution of the crisis in Kosovo.

[From Newsday, Apr. 4, 1999]

KOSOVO FAILURES SHOW PATH TO REAL PEACE

(By Michael Klare)

The time has come to acknowledge that the current U.S.-NATO strategy in Yugoslavia is a failure. Not one of the air war's objectives—the cessation of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, the weakening of Slobodan Milosevic or the prevention of a wider conflict—has been achieved. Instead, the atrocities are getting worse, Milosevic is stronger than ever, and the war is spreading. Nor is there any indication that an expanded air campaign will prove more successful. We must look for other options.

Without alternatives, we could be doomed to involvement in a conflict lacking any discernible conclusion. The United States and NATO launched the air war under the naive assumption that Milosevic would quickly succumb to a dramatic (and relatively cost-free) show of force. Evidently, no thought was given to the possibility that he would not. Now, it seems that the alliance's only option is to extend the bombing to an ever-widening array of targets in Serbia. Such attacks are not, however, likely to end the fighting, ensure the safety of the Albanians in Kosovo, or produce a lasting and stable peace in the Balkans. Unless Milosevic loses his nerve—something for which he has shown no prior inclination—the attacks will simply grind on with no visible end in sight. Meanwhile, the unity heretofore shown by the NATO countries is likely to crumble and the prospects for a Dayton-like peace accord are likely to vanish.

That is strategy based solely on air strikes would achieve all of NATO's objectives was a dubious proposition from the start. By bombing Serbia, we provided a pretext for Milosevic to silence his opposition at home and to escalate the killing in Kosovo—an outcome that should have been obvious to NATO war planners. It should also have been obvious that the Serbian population—highly nationalistic to begin with—would respond to the bombing by rallying around its leadership.

Many analysts have spoken of the practical obstacles to an effective air campaign in Yugoslavia: the difficult terrain, the bad weather, the interspersing of military and civilian installations and so on. Certainly, these are important factors. But it was NATO's failure to calculate the political outcome of the campaign that has proved most calamitous: The more we have bombed, the stronger—not weaker—Milosevic has become.

NATO officials now contend that the way to alter this equation is by increasing the level of pain being inflicted on Serbia from the air. This will be done by attacking government buildings in downtown Belgrade and civilian installations—such as bridges and factories—throughout the country.

Supposedly, this will erode public support for Milosevic and persuade elements of the Yugoslav Army to seek peace with NATO. But it could easily produce the opposite effect: intensifying Serbian hostility to the West and provoking Serbian military incursions into neighboring countries. We see the start of this already, with the shelling of Albania and the seizure of U.S. soldiers in Macedonia.

NATO could also alter the equation by sending ground troops into Kosovo. This would permit allied forces to engage those Serbian units most directly involved in the slaughter of ethnic Albanians. It is doubtful, however, that NATO forces could get there soon enough and in sufficient strength to make a difference. Once troops are deployed there, moreover, it may prove impossible to bring them back. Given the Serbs' growing hostility to the West, any hope of achieving a lasting peace in the region—one that does not require the presence of a large, permanent NATO force to police it—has all but disappeared.

One lesson we should all draw from this is that military force—and particularly the frequently unanticipated political fallout from such force—is very difficult to control. Once Clinton gave the go-ahead for air strikes, he set in motion forces that are not subject to easy manipulation. If Washington backs down now, the credibility of NATO will be seriously impaired—hence the temptation to escalate the conflict rather than to admit failure. With each new escalation, however, the stakes grow higher and it becomes even more difficult to extricate ourselves from the spiral of conflict. This is, of course, precisely how the United States became so deeply ensnared in Vietnam.

There is also the issue of casualties—American, allied, Kosovar and Serbian. It is hard to conceive of any type of escalation, whether in the air or on the ground, that will not produce a higher rate of casualties. It may be, as some pundits have argued, that we have to risk higher casualties in order to produce a desirable outcome. But it would be an unforgivable mistake to incur higher casualties simply in order to rescue a strategy that is flawed to begin with.

Rather than think about escalating the conflict, therefore, we have to find ways of de-escalating it—of reducing the level of violence while providing real protection to the remaining Albanians in Kosovo.

Is this a realistic option? There are still grounds to think so. The key to a lasting peace in the Balkans is persuading the Serbs that they have more to gain from participating in the stability and prosperity of the West than from continued defiance and penury.

The way to do this, I believe, is to stop the bombing of Serbia proper while deploying a NATO air umbrella over Kosovo and adjacent areas of Serbia. NATO should resolve to allow safe passage to all Yugoslav military units in Kosovo that elect to return to their bases in Serbia. But any such forces that continue fighting in Kosovo, or that seek to enter the region from Serbia, will be attached on sight.

Likewise, any Serbian military aircraft that enter Kosovar airspace, or that interfere with the operation of the NATO air umbrella, would be shot down—as with the existing ''no-fly zone'' over southern Iraq.

To give this strategy some added teeth, NATO could infiltrate special commandos equipped with air/ground communications systems and laser target-designators. These units would avoid battle themselves, but could pinpoint the exact location of any Serbian forces still engaged in ethnic cleansing for instant attack from the air. The ultimate goal should be a regime of zero tolerance for Serbian assaults on civilians in Kosovo. This is precisely the sort of operation at which the special units involved in the recent rescue of the downed American F–117 fighter pilot are especially proficient.

At the same time, Serbia itself should be placed under a draconian trade embargo, similar to that imposed on Iraq—allowing in nothing but food and medical supplies. All roads and rail lines leading into Serbia would be closely monitored, and any attempts to circumvent the embargo would provoke a harsh response from NATO. Then we could offer the option of negotiations. The choices for Belgrade should be framed as follows: If you agree to a just settlement in Kosovo, the sanctions will be lifted and Serbia will be allowed to rejoin Europe and benefit from its prosperity; if not, you will be spared from further bombing, but you will live in perpetual isolation and poverty. Such an approach would deprive Milosevic of the political advantage he now enjoys from the NATO bombings, while increasing the attraction of a permanent peace accord.

The lesson of recent international peace negotiations—including the Oslo accords on Israel and Palestine and the settlement in Northern Ireland—is that agreement is reached most easily when all parties involved perceive a mutual advantage in reaching accommodation. Merely threatening pain is not enough: The Serbs must believe they will enjoy genuine benefits from granting independence or autonomy to the Albanian Kosovars.

A strategy of this sort, resting on the de-escalation of violence, will be much easier to sustain—and far more effective—than the present policy of escalation. It can be implemented immediately, without exposing the Albanian Kosovars to increased danger. Most of all, it would allow the United States and NATO to articulate a lasting outcome to the crisis that we can live with in good conscience.

HONORING CATHERINE O. SPATOLA

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Catherine O. Spatola, the principal of P.S. 123K in Brooklyn, New York. For over 20 years Ms. Spatola has been a beacon in the community and a role model to her students, and this week her service to the community will be officially recognized as the auditorium at P.S. 123K is named in her honor.